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id: 14483
date: 3/2/2004 22:05
refid: 04BOGOTA2198
origin: Embassy Bogota
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination:
header:

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 002198

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/03/2014
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [SNAR](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: GOC HARD LINE ON DEMOBILIZATION MAKES
NARCOTERRORISTS UNEASY

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons 1.5 (b)
and (d).

Summary

1. (C) The United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia's (AUC) Centauros Bloc -- which is heavily invested in drug trafficking and involved in a struggle with a rival paramilitary bloc over control of territory and narcotics interests -- publicly announced it will not demobilize without firm GOC security guarantees for its area of operations and alternatives to jail time for its leaders. Representatives of the Peace Commissioner's Office will meet with the Bloc in early March to issue an ultimatum: join the demobilization process in good faith or drop out completely and face the full force of the security forces. The Centauros Bloc's announcement underscores the AUC's tenuous unity and the paramilitaries' concern with the GOC's stance that they must obey the terms of demobilization, including troop concentration and legal accountability. End Summary.

Public Dissension From the Centauros Bloc

2. (C) On February 27, a senior commander of the paramilitary Centauros Bloc, an affiliate of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), publicly announced the bloc's unwillingness to demobilize until the GOC provides security guarantees in their area of operations and alternatives to jail time for the bloc's leaders. Until its recent announcement, the Centauros Bloc, although guilty of scores of blatant cease-fire violations, towed the AUC line and publicly supported the demobilization process initiated by the Santa Fe de Ralito accord, which it signed. The Bloc's decision to publicly condition any demobilization, apparently without authorization from its nominal AUC superiors, underscores the AUC's tenuous unity.

3. (C) Over the past few months, the Centauros Bloc has clashed repeatedly with the independent Self-Defense Forces of Casanare (ACC), which is not participating in demobilization negotiations. Both groups operate on Colombia's northeastern plains, where they struggle over key drug cultivation and trafficking routes. Centauros Bloc commander Miguel Arroyave's reticence to accept demobilization wholeheartedly reflects both his aversion to ceding narcotrafficking influence to his ACC rivals and his concerns about potential criminal cases against him, both in Colombia and the United States. (Note: We have not asked for Arroyave's extradition. End note.)

4. (C) Carlos Franco, director of the GOC's human rights office and a member of its exploratory commission on demobilization, told the Embassy that the GOC is frustrated by dissension both within the AUC and between it and other paramilitary organizations. On March 4 or 5, the exploratory commission plans to meet with the Centauros Bloc's leaders to issue an ultimatum: join the demobilization process in good faith or drop out completely and face the full force of the security forces. The GOC can hold up as an example the fate of the late Metro Bloc, which publicly declared its opposition to the peace process and was eventually destroyed by separate offensives from rival paramilitary groups and, to a lesser extent, the security forces. The GOC recently issued a similar ultimatum to the ACC, and has also pressured the Middle Magdalena and Elmer Cardenas Blocs.

Comment

15. (C) The Centauros Bloc's recent announcements, as well as the GOC's firm response -- backed up with the threat of increased military pressure -- demonstrates that the peace process has not been a sweetheart deal.

WOOD

=====CABLE ENDS=====